

Amendments to the Claims

1 - 7 Cancelled

8. (New) A plug-in module frame comprising:

at least one socket having at least one signal contact for communicating information signals between the plug-in module frame and a plug-in module mounted to the socket, the socket comprising type detecting circuitry to detect a characteristic of the plug-in module mounted in the socket, the characteristic being associated with a protocol supported by the plug-in module; and

a protocol converter operatively connected to the type detecting circuitry and having first and second terminals, the protocol converter operable to support a plurality of protocols and configured to:

receive a first information signal encoded according to a first protocol at the first terminal;

convert the first information signal from the first protocol to a second protocol based on the detected characteristic;

transmit the converted first information signal encoded over the second terminal.

9. (New) The plug-in module frame of claim 8 wherein the protocol converter is further configured to:

receive a second information signal encoded according to the second protocol at the second terminal;

convert the second information signal from the second protocol to the first protocol based on the detected characteristic; and

transmit the converted second information signal over the first terminal.

10. (New) The plug-in module frame of claim 8 further comprising a plurality of sockets, each socket including a signal contact and type detecting circuitry.

11. (New) The plug-in module frame of claim 10 wherein the protocol converter comprises a plurality of converter units, each converter unit being operable to support a subset of the plurality of protocols.

12. (New) The plug-in module frame of claim 11 further comprising switching circuitry to selectively connect a signal contact of a first socket to a corresponding one of the protocol converter units based on the protocol associated with the characteristic detected by the type detecting circuitry of the first socket.

13. (New) The plug-in module frame of claim 8 wherein the type detecting circuitry comprises a circuit to address and read a storage component.

14. (New) The plug-in module frame of claim 8 wherein the socket is configured to receive a SFP module.

15. (New) A plug-in module configured to be inserted into a plug-in module frame, the plug-in module comprising:

a type encoding device to interface with a type detecting unit associated with the plug-in module frame; and

the type encoding device being configured to encode an information signal according to a protocol that is supported by the plug-in module.

16. (New) The plug-in module of claim 15 wherein the type encoding device comprises an electronic read-only memory.

17. (New) The plug-in module of claim 15 wherein the plug-in module comprises an SFP-plug-in module.